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AUTHOR Milne, Rosemary; Clarke, Priscilla
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ABSTRACT

An Australian study developed recommendations, policies, models, and strategies for the establishment, maintenance, and evaluation of bilingual education programs in preschool and child care centers, as either full bilingual programs or bilingual components of other programs. Results are presented here. The methodology used was to describe and evaluate aspects of existing bilingual programs in child care centers and preschools and follow the transition of some participating children to elementary schools. The report begins with recommendations in four groups: those concerning public policy, for policy-makers and government agencies; those concerning preservice and inservice education for early childhood teachers; recommendations regarding program construction, implementation, and evaluation; and suggestions for the professional association (Free Kindergarten Association Multicultural Resource Centre) sponsoring the study, to ensure that recommendations result in action and to guide some future activities. A brief rationale follows each group of recommendations. The second section of the report offers policy recommendations that might be used in the policy statements of child care centers and preschools. Section 3 describes considerations in developing a bilingual program, and offers several broad models. Section 4 describes the research project from which these recommendations emerged. The final section summarizes the study's findings. Contains 27 references. (MSE)

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Bilingual Early Childhood Education in Child Care and Preschool Centres

Rosemary Milne and Priscilla Clarke

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Preface

This is the report of a research study: **Development of Bilingual Models for Early Childhood Education Prior to School Entry** which was funded by the Australian Government, Department of Education, Employment and Training, under the Australian Second Language Learning Programme, with whom the copyright resides.

Research Initiation: Priscilla Clarke
Director of Research: Rosemary Milne
Sponsoring body: Free Kindergarten Association
Multicultural Resource Centre

Background to the Research

The aim was to develop policies, recommendations, models and strategies that would assist people to establish, maintain and evaluate bilingual models in preschool or child care centres, either as full bilingual programs or as bilingual perspectives in other programs. The approach was to describe and evaluate aspects of the bilingual programs in selected child care and preschool centres, including following the transition of children from the bilingual programs into primary (elementary) school.

The project arose from the belief of the Free Kindergarten Association Multicultural Resource Centre (FKA MRC) that services for children below school age can play a vital role in ensuring the continuation and development of the first language and the learning of English as a second language.

As part of the children's services program of the Australian Government's Department of Health, Housing and Community Services, a number of ethnic sponsored child care centres have been funded by the Australian Government in the last twenty years. Although these centres operate (like all Government-funded centres) to include any child who requires care, the majority of the children attending come from the particular ethnic background of the program.

The FKA MRC has a responsibility to resource and advise the bilingual child care centres. This research was proposed, funded and conducted in 1991-1992.

Steering Committee

Ms. Priscilla Clarke	Chairperson
Ms. Jenny Grosdas	Australian Greek Welfare Society (1991)
Ms. Helen Silvestro	Australian Greek Welfare Society (1992)
Sister Florence	Antonine Sisters Child Care Centre (1991)
Sister Daad	Antonine Sisters Child Care Centre (1992)
Mr. Phuc Le	Acacia Indo-Chinese Children's Centre
Ms. Trinh Duong	Acacia Indo-Chinese Children's Centre
Dr. Bee Chin Ng	Monash University (1991)
Ms. Kathy Jenkins	Monash University (1992)
Ms. Dina Guest	Victorian Department of School Education
Ms. Athina Georgio	La Trobe University
Ms. Priscilla Clarke	F.K.A. Multicultural Resource Centre
Ms. Creina Porter	F.K.A. Multicultural Resource Centre
Director of Research	Dr. Rosemary Milne
Consultant	Professor Michael Clyne, Centre for Language and Society, Monash University, Melbourne.

Particular thanks are due to all the parents, children, educators, interpreters and administrative staff involved in this project.

Copies of the Research Report are available from:

Priscilla Clarke, Director.
Free Kindergarten Association Multicultural Resource Centre
1st Floor, 9 - 11 Stewart St., Richmond Vic. 3121. Australia.
Telephone: (03) 428 4471 Fax: (03) 429 9252.

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CHAPTER 1: RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations are presented in 4 sections.

1. **Government Policy Recommendations**: directed to policy makers and government agencies.

2. **Professional Training Recommendations**: directed to educational institutions providing initial and post-initial courses for the professional training and development of persons to work in early childhood care and education services.

3. **Program Administration Recommendations**: directed at the local level of policy making, and program construction, implementation and evaluation, to those already responsible for bilingual programs, and those considering setting up, administering and evaluating such programs.

4. **FKA Multicultural Resource Centre Recommendations**: directed internally to ensure that recommendations result in action and to guide some future activities of the FKA MRC.

A brief rationale follows each section but the full report should be consulted to see how the recommendations arise out of the whole project.

1. Government Policy Recommendations:
directed to policy makers and government agencies.

Recommendation 1.1
Institutions providing early childhood care and education such as kindergartens, preschools and child care centres should be recognized as institutions of society in which significant early education takes place.

Recommendation 1.2
Bilingual early childhood programs should be regarded as representing a mainstream model of early childhood care and education alongside other mainstream models.

Recommendation 1.3
Every early childhood education program in Australia receiving government funding should be expected to be working towards the inclusion of bilingual or multilingual aspects as soon as possible.

Recommendation 1.4
A variety of models of early childhood education programs should be recognized as capable of providing bilingual early childhood education in the years before school entry.

A range of bilingual programs of early childhood education 0 - 5 years, representing different community languages and English, and a variety of administrative structures, should be encouraged, to provide a choice for all families, both non-English speaking background (NESB) and English speaking background.

Recommendation 1.5
Those involved with the selection of staff in programs of early childhood care and education should be encouraged to employ some staff with the ability to speak more than one language, even if the program is not designated as a bilingual program.

Recommendation 1.6
Existing staff in bilingual programs should be given opportunities to attend regular professional development programs directly related to working in bilingual programs. Payments for relief staff should be made available to enable staff to attend.

Recommendation 1.7

There should be a regular review of all bilingual early childhood programs receiving special government funding. Funds should be set aside for this type of review.

Rationale

Educational institutions are responsible for preparing children to participate fully in a multicultural society. Programs of early childhood care and education are part of our society's educational institutions.

There is an inextricable educational component in any child care program. Language learning is a core component of this early education. It is in these years from birth to five years that the foundations of literacy are laid.

All Australian children should have the opportunity to become competent speakers of English.

All Australian children should have the opportunity to become competent speakers of a second language.

Early childhood education institutions in Australia must rapidly reflect multilingual as well as multicultural perspectives.

Parents from non-English speaking backgrounds should have the opportunity to have their children cared for in a preschool or child care program that supports their home language and culture.

Children of non-English speaking backgrounds should be able to maintain and develop their first or home languages.

It should be appreciated that the mother tongue is the basis of all subsequent language development including literacy and the learning of English as a second language.

For NESB children, development of the home language from birth to five years is an important factor in their satisfactory development in many other areas, including social and personality development, and parent-child relationships.

At the present time, large numbers of young NESB children in monolingual child care or preschool programs may develop only passive skills in their home language. Even if the language is maintained it may not be developed.

Languages other than English (LOTE) programs in primary schools can help children re-activate their first language if there has been a gap. However, it is better for the child, and for the efficiency of further language learning in LOTE programs, to maintain the first language, through bilingual child care, rather than have to re-establish it after school entry.

The potential benefit of bilingual child care for children from English speaking backgrounds is largely ignored. Very few of these children were encountered in bilingual programs. For children from English speaking backgrounds, bilingual early childhood programs prior to school entry can provide ideal environments for second language learning and preparation for LOTE programs in schools.

Children in full-time child care for approximately four years prior to school entry may have spent as many hours in the centre as they will spend in school during their primary school years. They may also have spent many more waking hours in the child care centre than they have spent at home with their parents. Australian society cannot afford to ignore the potential for both first and second language acquisition in bilingual childhood programs.

It is no longer enough simply to have multicultural perspectives in all early childhood programs, although this is essential and is the first step. The whole curriculum must be grounded in a multicultural context. A monolingual curriculum for preschool or child care programs does not meet these conditions in Australia today. We must be working rapidly towards the goal of bilingual (or multilingual) contexts for Australian education from birth to five years.

The present research has shown that satisfactory bilingual early childhood education can take place in a variety of forms. It does not necessitate major changes in present program models. Early childhood bilingual programs are adaptable to a wide variety of settings. Program models can include full bilingual programs, programs with some bilingual context in child care, preschool, home based care, play groups etc. They may involve a community language and English; several or many community languages and English; or English and a second language which is not actually spoken much in the immediate surrounding community. Children may come into the programs with a range of abilities, including a range of language skills and knowledge, but also including cultural, intellectual, social and physical differences.

Bilingual early childhood programs should not become early assimilation programs. Where there is any imbalance in the program between the community language and culture and the English, the weighting should be

made to favour the community language and culture, to balance the dominant influence of English in the wider society.

Making bilingual programs a mainstream model in early childhood education prior to school entry would not necessarily be more expensive than maintaining present monolingual models. Staffing needs can be addressed by increasing the value given to second language proficiency in the initial and post-initial training of early childhood educators (See Professional Training Recommendations below). The graduates of bilingual early childhood programs would themselves be contributing to this bilingual pool for college intake selection within fifteen years.

The special needs of staff presently working in bilingual programs, the inexperience, isolated contexts, and the inadequate knowledge base from which some of them feel they are working, are noted from differing perspectives in the rationale for all four sections of recommendations. In terms of government agencies, funding assistance is needed to set up a regular training network for these workers, and to supply relief staff in conjunction with this so that workers are able to attend, until such time as all the major training institutions amend their courses as below. The FKA MRC is in a good position to supply the training need, in that it already has the most comprehensive knowledge, resources and experience in this area.

2. Professional Training Recommendations:

directed to educational institutions providing initial and post-initial courses for the professional training and development of persons to work in early childhood care and education services.

Recommendation 2.1

Institutions offering training to professionals in early childhood care and education should consider the implications of recognition that bilingualism is the international norm in child development. They should examine course content and text books and make any necessary changes to reflect this fact.

Recommendation 2.2

Institutions providing initial training for early childhood educators should take the necessary steps to ensure that bilingual persons represent as high a proportion as possible of their intake. Where scores are assessed for selection to professional training courses, bonus points should be awarded for second language proficiency.

Recommendation 2.3

Institutions should promote the learning of a language other than English by all early childhood educators. Courses should be structured so that students can gain course credits for the learning of additional languages. Bilingual students should be supported and encouraged to maintain their languages.

Recommendation 2.4

The study of second language acquisition in young children should be a compulsory part of initial training for all early childhood educators.

Recommendation 2.5

Study of the methodology of first language maintenance in non-English speaking background children should be a compulsory part of initial training for early childhood educators.

Recommendation 2.6

Institutions involved with the training of primary teachers should provide information to students on what constitutes a developmentally appropriate program in preschool or child care centres, and the potential contribution of such a program to first and second language development prior to school entry.

Rationale

This research has revealed that by no means all early childhood educators in bilingual programs are experienced professionals; some are in their first year in the field after gaining their initial certificate, diploma or degree.

All institutions offering initial training for early childhood educators should by now be including multicultural perspectives as essential parts of courses rather than simply as an elective study or an 'add-on'. They should now be ready to extend this perspective so that their graduates have the knowledge and skills ready to work in bilingual or multilingual programs. There are, at present, still grave gaps in some courses in relation to multicultural perspectives; the gaps are even more apparent in relation to multilingual perspectives.

Much of the contempory language material for primary teachers does not indicate awareness of the nature, amount and developmental stages of language acquisition prior to the age of school entry. This applies in all areas: English as a first language, English as a second language, and languages other than English. Literacy is often spoken of as if it is something that begins in a school classroom, with little appreciation of how a preschool or child care centre can provide an excellent context for both first and second language development.

3. Program Administration Recommendations:

directed at the local level of policy making and program construction, implementation and evaluation, to those already responsible for bilingual programs, and those considering setting up, administering and evaluating such programs.

Recommendation 3.1

Each centre should develop its own policy document, taking into account general policy statements covering bilingual programs for early childhood education and specific policy statements related to local or community needs.

Recommendation 3.2

The set of policies should be formed in discussion with parents and the community.

Recommendation 3.3

The set of policies should be reviewed annually in conjunction with an evaluation of the early childhood program and an evaluation of changing circumstances and needs in the community. Parents and the community should be involved in the evaluation.

Recommendation 3.4

Policies should influence practice. All staff and families at the centre should be assisted to understand the link between policies and practices and be expected to act accordingly.

Recommendation 3.5

Children in a bilingual program should develop proficiency in both languages and be able to identify with both cultures. The management committee should be vigilant in its responsibility to see that the bilingual program does not become merely an assimilatory program in which English takes over as the dominant language.

Rationale

See Chapter 2 Policies, for the rationale related to this local level of program administration.

4. FKA Multicultural Resource Centre Recommendations:
directed internally to promote action on the above recommendations.

Recommendation 4.1
The FKA MRC should take the necessary steps to bring the previous recommendations to the attention of relevant persons and to work, as appropriate, towards their implementation.

Recommendation 4.2
The FKA MRC should plan and seek funding as required to implement those activities arising out of the above recommendations which match its own mission statement.

Recommendation 4.3
The FKA MRC should seek to increase public awareness of early childhood bilingual education and its potential in relation to the development of languages for both non-English speaking background (NESB) and English speaking background children.

Recommendation 4.4
The FKA MRC should seek to increase the awareness of management committees of bilingual programs of the advantages of including children from English speaking backgrounds, to assist in the acquisition of English as a second language for NESB children, recognizing that peer models as well as adult language models are needed.

Recommendation 4.5
The FKA MRC should seek to increase the awareness of parents, early childhood educators and others of the importance of the maintenance and development of the first language of young NESB children.

Recommendation 4.6
The FKA MRC should encourage preschools, kindergartens and child care centres to communicate and co-operate further with schools, to facilitate the transition of bilingual children to primary school and to encourage the further development of their bilingualism.

Recommendation 4.7
The FKA MRC should encourage research to explore the special language program needs of third generation children 0 - 5 years whose parents want them to maintain or develop their ethnic language background (which may not be strong in the home) and develop their English language.

Recommendation 4.8
The FKA MRC should encourage research to explore further the needs of third language children in care and education settings below the age of school entry. The term 'third language children' is used here to mean those children whose home language is a language other than one of the dominant languages of a bilingual or multilingual program.

Recommendation 4.9
The FKA MRC should seek funding for an action research project on stages of development of English as a second language, and languages other than English, below school entry age, and related language assessment tools, to assist in the assessment of bilingual children's language development.

Recommendation 4.10
The FKA MRC should seek funding to construct methods of information, organization and communication, so that information on the development of early literacy and languages will cross systems when children go to school, and to train early childhood trainers to use these tools.

Recommendation 4.11
The FKA MRC should seek funding to mount a series of professional development workshops for staff working in bilingual programs, based on practical materials to meet the needs of staff working in bilingual programs, as expressed by staff during this research project.

Recommendation 4.12
The FKA MRC should seek funding to produce a publication for staff working or intending to work in bilingual programs, related to the workshops proposed in Recommendation 4.11.

Rationale
There is at present no Australian text related to bilingual early childhood programs. Such a publication should be a marketable proposition. The need for both workshops and text has been established during this research. The final Recommendations, 4.11 and 4.12 above, are therefore of major importance as the follow-on steps to the present project. In many cases of research, little happens after the report is presented. All recommendations are lifeless until some people take action to use them to influence change. Fortunately, this project on the Development of Bilingual Models for Early Childhood Programs is sponsored by a body with a long history of effecting changes in the field of early childhood care and education.

CHAPTER 2: POLICIES

The recommendations to committees of management and others who administer bilingual programs at the local level are set out in Chapter 1, Section 3, Program Administration Recommendations. In Chapter 1 it was recommended that each centre construct its own policy document, review the document regularly, and oversee links between the policies and the practices in the centre.

This chapter sets out policy statements which might be considered for a place in the overall policy document. It is unlikely that the policies here will provide a complete set for any one centre, as cultural emphases, local conditions, and changing circumstances should be reflected in the policy document of each centre.

Policies should, in turn, be reflected in all aspects of the program including the structure of the program; selection of staff and of children; all aspects of person to person communication both in the centre and in the community; and child rearing and educational practices occurring in the program.

Regular evaluation of the program, the policies, and the matches or mismatches between them both should take place and should be used to guide changes.

Over-reaching Policy

Policy 1: The program will care and educate young children to be bilingual speakers and to function in and contribute to a multicultural society.

A bilingual program is an entire early childhood education program where the children are regularly exposed to two (or more) languages and are encouraged to interact with the educators and with each other through the use of both languages.

A bilingual program aims to maintain and develop the first language of the child; to introduce the child to a second language and assist the development of fluency in it; to promote a strong self-concept with positive feelings about ethnic identity; and to cultivate multicultural or pluralistic perspectives.

The appreciation of diversity will involve more than simply the contents of the curriculum. It will also be reflected in the organization of the centre, staff selection and practices, and relationships between adults and adults, adults and children, children and children, and the centre and the community. There will be an avoidance of practices that discriminate negatively against people on the basis of race, ethnic origin, language, gender, religion or handicap.

Community Participation

Policy 2: Parents and members of the community will be encouraged to participate in management decision-making processes including the design and evaluation of programs.

Information necessary for the community to be kept informed should be distributed in the languages required.

Cultural Identity

Policy 3: The program will support children's identification with the cultural and linguistic heritage of their family.

A strong identification with a particular ethnic community and culture will often be the foundation of a bilingual program. This is important to the experience of families and children from that ethnic community. It is necessary for the social and personality development of children, and for the integrity of the family, that this identification be supported.

Children who come from cultural backgrounds different from the main ethnic culture of the program, from both non-English speaking background (NESB) and English speaking background families, must also be supported in building esteem for their family cultural and linguistic heritage. From this foundation they may then gain additional richness from the main ethnic identification in the program.

Policy 4: The program will support for all children the development of identification with the cultural and linguistic heritage of Australia.

For young NESB children, this Australian identification should be built on the foundation of the family identification. Given a strong primary foundation, children can begin to build the plural identifications necessary for life in a multicultural society.

Policy 5: All children will learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and languages.

Whether there are children from these cultures in the program or not, this knowledge is necessary to build a valid historical perspective on the origins of multicultural Australia. It is highly desirable that aspects of these cultures be taught by the people represented, whenever possible.

Multicultural Perspective

Policy 6: The whole environment: program content, materials and communication, will reflect the valuing of a multicultural, multilingual perspective.

From the primary cultural bases, the program should move out to encompass a multicultural perspective.

The environment should give strong visual and auditory messages that this is a place where people value cultural and linguistic diversity.

Staff should reinforce through their practices a positive vision of Australian society as a multicultural society. They should be made aware of this aspect of their role before appointment to the program.

Commitment to Bilingual Program

Policy 7: A commitment to the bilingual or multilingual program will be expected from all staff.

Staff need be informed before appointment to the program that they will be expected to reflect this commitment in their attitudes, program content and practices.

They must convey the knowledge that it is desirable for a person, child or adult, to speak more than one language.

It is desirable that staff themselves speak more than one language even though the language policy of the centre is that the children identify one adult with one language.

Monolingual staff members working a bilingual program should be encouraged to learn a second language. The language need not necessarily be a language spoken in the particular centre, since the purpose is not for the staff member to serve as a language model to children in the second language but to come to understand some of the processes of learning a second language and to promote positive attitudes to bilingualism.

Developmental Perspective

Policy 8: The bilingual program will take place within a total program of early childhood care and education, with developmentally appropriate aims and practices for children below school age.

Young children are at different development stages to school-age children and learn in different ways.

The stimulation of development will be part of the total environment of the centre rather than being viewed within the narrow focus of 'instructional' tasks or 'educational' equipment.

Social Development

Policy 9: The program will teach children the social understanding, commitment and skills necessary for citizenship in a multicultural society.

Children in the program should learn to consider the rights and the welfare of others, and to become skilled in negotiation, democratic decision making and mediation.

Status of Languages

Policy 10: All languages will be treated with equal respect.

The main languages in a bilingual program should be given equal status, time and staffing. However, adults may convey that one language may be more appropriate than another in a particular circumstance.

Where there is any imbalance, it should usually be resolved in favour of the language other than English. This is because of the importance of mother tongue maintenance for NESB children in their early years, and because the dominance of the English language in the wider Australian society, to which all the children will be exposed, means that NESB children and English speaking background children will both benefit by a bilingual program that restores the balance by giving prominence to the language other than English.

NESB children with a language background other than the main languages in the bilingual program must be shown that their language and culture is equally respected. It should at least be introduced in some songs, games, stories etc., perhaps using parents as extra language resources, or visiting staff.

Equal status of language speakers is an important aspect of a bilingual program. Staff members should be seen by children to show respect and valuing of each other's role, culture and language.

The necessary conditions for conveying the idea of equal status may not be fulfilled when the community language speakers always hold the lesser professional rank of teachers' aides, or the staff members serving as English language models in an ethnic community program do not have avenues for input into decision making.

Language Environment

Policy 11: The program will aim to provide the best possible bilingual language learning environment. All children will be encouraged to maintain and develop their first language and to become competent speakers of at least one other language.

Language development is a primary goal in all programs of early childhood education. Language learning occurs best in the context of all the young child's activities including play with peers and many different kinds of language interactions with children and adults.

Bilingualism does not hinder the development of either language, as long as the first language is not allowed to be lost. There is some evidence that bilingualism has intellectual advantages for children in that it assists them to look at things from more than one perspective.

Good quality bilingual programs require staff who understand first and second language development in early childhood.

Policy 12: The adult language model of one person speaking only one language to the children will be preferred.

Generally speaking, this model of one person - one language has been found to be the most favoured way to bring up children bilingually, as it helps children to keep the languages separate and makes it necessary for them to use both languages, each in the appropriate place. There are many successful ways of using this model in practice, some of which are discussed in Chapter 3 Program Language Models.

Policy 13: Native speakers or near native speakers will be used where possible as the adult language models for each language.

Children will learn from a range of models but the major language models in the program should have native or near native quality so that children will be exposed to the best possible adult language models for each language.

This is one of the reasons why the one person - one language model is preferred over that of having one person speak both the community language and English to the children on a regular basis.

It is also one of the reasons why first language maintenance in the home, by NESB parents, is preferable to the parents feeling that it is part of their role to teach English to their young child.

The importance of peer models for each language should not be neglected.

Policy 14: The bilingual program will include, if possible, English speaking background children as well as NESB children.

Child language models are desirable as well as adult models. Children can provide valuable language models for each other and the communication skills children learn from other children are somewhat different from those the adults provide.

The ratio of English speaking background children to NESB children will vary according to local circumstances and decisions. Up to a fifty-fifty ratio has been shown to work without diminishing the particular ethnic ambience and the bilingual nature of the program, so long as there is constant vigilance that the program does not become an assimilatory program rather than a bilingual program. The strong involvement of the ethnic community in management appears to be an important factor in preserving a bilingual program.

Maintenance of Mother Tongue

Policy 15: Parents of NESB children will be encouraged to maintain the child's first language in the home.

This is an important factor in bilingual education. The early bonding and transmission of cultural content is built on first language communication; the use of mother tongue in the home provides opportunities for the child not only to maintain the first language but to go on developing it; and it goes some way towards redressing the balance when the child is exposed to the dominance of English in the wider environment.

A bilingual program must strengthen, not weaken, the status and authority of parents.

NESB parents may need help in understanding the importance of their role in maintaining the first language in the home rather than in trying to teach English in the home.

Accurate information about the cultural and linguistic background of all children in the centre should be obtained on enrolment and should be available to staff working with the children.

Staff Development

Policy 16: Educators in the program will have a sound base of knowledge and skill in both the first and second language development of young children, and in bilingual education.

Since this is not yet provided in all training programs for early childhood educators, staff working in bilingual programs should be encouraged to attend professional development courses that will help them acquire this basis for their work.

Staff needs may require that they have opportunities to be involved in regular professional development programs related to working in bilingual programs, rather than one-off workshops.

Payments for relief staff should be sought so that staff in bilingual programs are free to attend.

Transition to School

Policy 17: Close liaison will be maintained with schools.

A profile of the child's development in languages in the early childhood centre will be available for parents to give schools, to aid the child's transition to school.

Information about the various language programs in local schools will be available for staff-parent discussion.

In many cases, practices such as the above, to ease transition, were not apparent.

Planning and Evaluation

Policy 18: The bilingual program will be reviewed annually. There will be a major review every five years.

Policies and practices should reflect and influence each other. Major reviews should involve at least one independent person with time and knowledge to bring to the task; funding should be set aside for this.

CHAPTER 3: PROGRAM MODELS

What is a Bilingual Early Childhood Program

The terms 'early childhood services', 'early childhood education' and 'early childhood programs' are commonly used in Australia to refer to care and education services before children enter the formal school system, that is, between birth and approximately five years of age.

There has been a steady increase in usage which extends the meaning of the term 'early childhood education' to cover education until eight years of age, bringing the definitions into line with theories of child development, most of which recognize the transition from early childhood to middle childhood as normally occurring between the seventh and eighth birthday.

There is evidence of a renewed appreciation within Australian school systems that the period up to approximately eight years of age has its own patterns of development which make it inappropriate to use, during the child's first three years of school, curriculum content and methods constructed for older students, even if they are used in diluted forms.

This renewed appreciation of the importance and the unique characteristics of early development and learning is reflected in the recent Ministerial Review of School-Entry Age in Victoria (Collins 1992). In its foreward-thinking conclusions, the committee of review emphasized that the age of entry is an issue of much less importance than what happens to children, of any entry age, in their first school years. The report helps break new ground within the formal school system by recognizing that early childhood education can take place in a variety of settings such as home, child care, or preschool centre, kindergarten or school. It firmly states that care and education in all these settings should be based on developmentally appropriate practice.

While applauding the growing recognition that the unique stage of development and learning that is called 'early childhood' extends through the first eight years, in the present study we will continue to use the term 'early childhood programs' to refer to programs of care and education for children prior to entry into the formal school system because that is still the most common use in Australia. In particular, in this study, we are referring to programs conducted in preschool and child care environments.

It is also necessary to describe what is meant in this report by 'bilingual' early childhood programs. Again, it is not referring to programs for school-age children such as the bilingual programs in some primary schools but to bilingual child care or preschool programs.

As has been noted in the Preface, a number of ethnic sponsored child care centres have been funded by the Australian government in the last two decades. The majority of the children attending these bilingual programs, which are usually established by an ethnic community, tend to come from the particular ethnic background of the program although, in accordance with the regulations for all government-funded centres, the programs are open to any child who requires care. Most of the programs are in South Australia and Victoria for these are the two states of Australia with the earliest and most extensive interest in bilingual programs of care and education for young children.

Ethnic sponsored child care centres in Victoria at present cover the following language groups: Arabic, Greek, Italian, Spanish, Turkish, Vietnamese and Yugoslav languages. Researchers have requested information about government-funded bilingual early childhood programs in other states of Australia. The list of such programs is not yet complete as some information has been difficult to obtain and follow-up is still going on.

In a broad sense, a bilingual child care or preschool program is any program that describes itself as a bilingual program and is funded as a bilingual program by the government. This loose definition is influenced by the fact that although government funds were available to establish and maintain some bilingual centres, no funds were set aside to evaluate these programs, or to assist early childhood organizations to develop policies and models that could provide guidelines for the development and evaluation of the programs. The present research project was proposed by the Free Kindergarten Association Multicultural Resource Centre in an effort to fill this gap.

In a tighter definition, a bilingual early childhood program is a program of care and education for children below school age, that seeks to support the maintenance and further development of a child's first language (and the culture of their family, for language and culture are intertwined) while also assisting the child to learn a second language. This definition purposefully does not say that the second language in early childhood bilingual programs will be English as a second language. For the majority of the children in the existing bilingual programs, the second language will be English. However, as can be seen from the recommendations of this report, it is advisable to keep

open the option that more children from English speaking backgrounds be included in the early childhood bilingual programs. As is discussed in Chapter 5 of this report, the inclusion of such native English speakers can provide strong mutual advantages for both first and second English language learners. Therefore, the most useful definition will not be framed in such a way as to exclude those children whose first language is English and whose second language will then be the main community language of the program. This way of defining bilingual programs has the advantage of including children of any language background while keeping the dual focus of bilingual programs on maintaining the first language while developing a second language, and on the development of English for all children whether it is their first or second language.

Other family language backgrounds are also accommodated in this definition, such as third language children who have a first language background that is neither English nor the main community language of the bilingual centre they attend. Another group with a different language background pattern is represented by the children in a child care program that caters predominately for second and third generation children from a particular migrant group. This group reflects changes in the language patterns of an ethnic community well-established in Australia with many of the adults fluent English speakers. Many of the parents in this centre had all or much of their schooling in Australia, in mainstream schools. Many reported that they spoke much more English in the home than the community language even though some said they tried hard to speak only the community language to their children. Educators, parents and researchers discussing this position concluded that it was often difficult to say which was the children's first language. Furthermore, some parents said, it was difficult to say which was their own dominant language; as is common amongst bilingual persons, it depended a lot on the context.

The cultural aspects of the bilingual programs were mentioned by many parents as of the first importance and should be acknowledged in definitions. Both fathers and mothers expressed a desire for a manner of child-rearing in the early years which matched their own home patterns and their own early childhood experiences. As is noted in Chapter 4, parent contact was limited in this study and was mainly dependent on the researchers initiating conversations when parents were 'on the run'. Nevertheless, it was apparent that culture and language were intertwined as reasons why many parents chose a bilingual early childhood centre.

It is of interest that 'exposure to another culture, in multicultural Australia' was also frequently spoken of as equally valued with 'learning a second language'

in the reasons given for the choice of a bilingual early childhood program by the few Anglo-Australian parents. While concurring wholeheartedly with this view, we must also draw attention to an important fact: when parents of a dominant cultural group (in this case Anglo-Australian) choose to place their child in a different cultural and linguistic environment, as in a bilingual child care program, this can be expected to contribute positively to the child's development. There is no threat to the child's linguistic nor cultural heritage since this is reinforced by the surrounding community. It is a very different matter when parents from a non-English speaking background have no choice but to place their child in an English speaking child care environment. In the latter case, there is a danger of the child's linguistic and cultural heritage being lost, and the relationship between parents and child being weakened, unless strong action is taken to prevent negative effects (Wong-Fillmore 1991). So, the value of 'exposure to another culture' needs to be weighed in a manner that also takes other factors into account.

Obviously, this whole area of parental choice and motivation for support of bilingual early childhood education is an area for more systematic research and the present study does little more than note anecdotal pointers in passing, with regard to both non-English speaking background families and English speaking background families. However, one thing is very clear: a bilingual early childhood education program must not be defined as or allowed to become a place where the intention or the outcome is to weaken the ethnic component so as to assimilate the dominant language and culture.

The recommendations of the present study include that bilingual programs be viewed as one of several models for mainstream programs of early childhood education, and that there should be encouragement for a greater number of English speaking background children in bilingual programs, on the basis of children acting as peer models for each other. This is considered valuable both for those learning English as a second language and for those learning a language other than English as a second language. However, mainstreaming always carries with it the danger of the ethnic community components being weakened or lost in the face of the dominant culture. If assimilation becomes a primary outcome of a bilingual early childhood program, due to the inclusion of more children who are native speakers of English, both groups of language learners will suffer but the loss to the non-English speaking background children will be far greater. Every program should have in place policy statements and evaluation procedures that guard the integrity of the dual culture and dual linguistic aspects of a bilingual program.

In summary, a bilingual program of early childhood education is a program that aims to develop the linguistic knowledge and skills of children in both their first language and a second language, and to do this in environments and with practices that are culturally relevant and can be expected to facilitate the overall development of children from birth to school entry age. In Australian bilingual early childhood programs, English will be either the first or second language, depending on a child's home language.

The aim for the standard of development in a child's first language should be at an age-appropriate level for native speakers of that language. The aim for the standard of achievement in the second language realistically may be wider. Affective factors such as positive attitudes towards the second language and culture, and confidence in communicating in the language, are generally considered far more important at the foundation level. As will be seen in Chapter 5, many of the NESB children in bilingual child care programs did appear to be achieving an age-appropriate level in English as a second language by the year prior to school entry. However, many factors outside the bilingual early childhood program can be expected to influence the learning, such as amount of exposure to the second language and its functional value. Fluent bilingual is the long-term goal but in early childhood models we are looking at ways to utilize the early years to lay good foundations.

Multicultural Perspectives

In none of the bilingual centres was there observed to be the narrow, monolingual, ethno-specific perspective that is still to be observed in some mainstream Australian early childhood programs; all the programs in this study displayed some degree of multicultural perspectives. At one end of the continuum were bilingual programs that presented a fairly narrow multicultural, multilingual context but in which there was always an awareness of at least two languages and two cultures side by side (one language being English and one culture Australian) with additional languages and cultures in the background. At the other end of the continuum were bilingual programs strongly expressing a multicultural, multilingual view of Australian society. This was evident in the policy documents, the variation in ethnic background of families and staff members, the range of languages used in the program, the attitudes expressed by staff, the program content and practices, and the equipment.

In some of the programs, established and administered by particular ethnic communities, there is a policy that deliberately seeks a percentage of the children from backgrounds other than the main ethnic group. There may be five

or six other languages represented in these programs, including English as the first language of some children. Such programs are bilingual in that the two main languages are English and the main community language, and all children are spoken to in both these languages and learn to speak them. However, the other languages and cultures of children in the centre are recognized and shown to be valued by deliberate planning to include them in the program through songs, stories and festivals and, wherever possible, through having other adult native speakers of these languages visit and join in activities with all children. Some programs visited could be described as multicultural and multilingual in an extremely rich and relevant sense.

The Preferred Language Policy: One Adult-One Language

The bilingual language policy used by the majority of the observed centres for their adult language policy was the policy generally supported by research as the preferred option, that is each adult being identified by the children with a particular language, speaking only that language with them (Romaine 1989). This policy, in various forms, appeared to work well. (In practice, this might mean speaking the designated language 'on most occasions' rather than 'only'.)

Four to five year old children were observed many times in many centres to use the appropriate language to the English language model and the appropriate language to the community language model, not only in response to an adult's language but also to initiate language interactions with an adult.

Models

In this study we observed many different bilingual programs with all kinds of mixtures of program elements such as highly structured or loosely structured content or timetable, mixed age grouping or separated age grouping, simultaneous exposure to two (or more) languages in the program timetable or separated exposure, and many others.

The following table presents one way of categorizing the different types of programs encountered so as to develop a range of useful models from this research. The table does not give a specific description of each program as it was encountered in this study; more than one bilingual program, each with minor differences, may have been used in the construction of any one model.

The models are not meant to represent an exhaustive list of possible models for bilingual early childhood programs. They represent models that we conclude can work successfully in certain contexts. Furthermore, each model is described with the set of characteristics that generally seem to work best within that model so, to some extent, each model in the table represents an ideal form.

The main point to be made at this stage is that this research supports the claim that any model in this table is capable of providing a useful framework for a program of bilingual early childhood education according to the definition of such education discussed earlier in this chapter. There is no one right way to conduct a bilingual early childhood program; programs should be tailored to fit the communities they serve, and evaluation must take into account the community values and aims that underlie the programs. Any one of these models can be used to build a bilingual program that will maintain and develop a child's first language, develop a second language at an early childhood level, and do this within a context that makes a positive contribution to all other important aspects of development and education for children from birth to school entry.

BILINGUAL MODELS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS:

5 models representing different types of programs to assist the development of bilingualism in child care and preschool settings.

Programs reflect the differing needs, desires, participation patterns and resources of the communities they serve. No program design is inherently better than any other in all circumstances; no particular model can work well in every community. The aim should be to match and adapt program design to the perceived and expressed needs of specific communities so that programs are not only culturally-responsive but community-responsive.

For assistance in developing appropriate models for aboriginal early childhood education, refer to appropriate authorities.

The diversity and flexibility of the program models is supported by a stable framework of principles perceived as important in all program models.

Common Principles for Bilingual Early Childhood Education

- Maintenance and development of the mother tongue of every child.
- English language development for all children.
- Exposure to languages other than English for all children.
- Parents' maintenance of home language encouraged for all children.
- Multicultural perspectives across all aspects of the program.
- Community-responsiveness of program design.
- Community and parent participation in the program.
- Regular evaluation.

MODEL 1	**Ethnic-sponsored Bicultural Child Care Model**
FUNDING	Government funded with ethnic community support.
POLICY	Common principles of all models, plus specific features as follows: • Ethnic sponsorship. • Employment of fluent speakers of the LOTE. • Employment of fluent speakers of English. • Bilingualism for all children. • Bicultural: LOTE and Australian.
CLIENTELE	• Predominantly reflecting the sponsor community.
CONTEXT	• Ethnic community. • Long Day Care.
LANGUAGE EMPHASES	• Equal LOTE and English. • All children exposed to the community LOTE. • All children exposed to English. Structure of program: • 0 - 3 year olds Predominantly LOTE • 3 - 4 year olds Transitional • 4 - 5 year olds Predominantly English • Multilingual perspectives encouraged within the predominantly bilingual environment. • Encouragement of home maintenance of any minority languages.

MODEL 2	**Regular Insertion Model** Insertion of bilingual staff into various existing groups
FUNDING	Government.
POLICY	Common principles of all models, plus specific features as follows: • Selected bilingual staff - part-time or drawn from pool of staff sponsored by agencies. • Placement of the bilingual staff in programs according to perceived language maintenance needs.
CLIENTELE	• Multilingual populations in children's services for groups perceived as having high needs for mother tongue staff, eg. recently arrived children, small minority groups, children of parents in English classes.
CONTEXT	• Mobile population. • High migrant density. • Full Day Care, Family Day Care, Preschool, Kindergarten, Occasional Care.
LANGUAGE EMPHASES	• Insertion of minority languages by mother tongue speakers into English speaking programs. • Exposure of children to their mother tongue at selected times.

MODEL 3	Language Recovery Model
FUNDING	Government funded with ethnic community support.
POLICY	Common principles of all models, plus specific features as follows: • Ethnic sponsorship. • Employment of fluent speakers of the LOTE. • Employment of fluent speakers of English. • One adult - one language model. • Bilingualism for all children. • Biculturalism for all children: LOTE and Australian. • Encouragement of the designated LOTE in the home.
CLIENTELE	• Second and third generation children of immigrant background.
CONTEXT	• Ethnic community concerned with LOTE recovery. • Full Day Care, Preschool, Kindergarten or Occasional Care.
LANGUAGE EMPHASES	• Major emphasis on the LOTE designated for recovery. • English for all children.

MODEL 4	**Designated Languages Model** Bilingual Preschools or Kindergartens
FUNDING	Government.
POLICY	Common principles of all models, plus specific features as follows: • Bilingual staff employed full-time or part-time, working with all children, to reflect the local community. • Languages for bilingual models designated each year according to community composition. • Qualified early childhood educators. • One adult - one language model. • Strong multicultural features.
CLIENTELE	• Multilingual populations. • Adapts easily to changes in language population. • Can also serve as a bilingual program for monolingual Anglo-Australian communities.
CONTEXT	• Traditional program with a high level of communicative interaction. • Sessional or Extended Hours Programs.
LANGUAGE EMPHASES	• English for all children. • Bilingual Support for designated LOTES. • Other community languages for all. • Parent participation to support minority languages and extend exposure to all children. • Home maintenance of minority languages encouraged.

MODEL 5	**Community Model** Depending on parent and community participation
FUNDING	Existing funding of program, plus voluntary effort.
POLICY	Common principles of all models, plus specific features as follows: • Use of parents or community members on a volunteer basis to provide LOTE models and language input. • Employment of bilingual staff as part of child-staff ratios.
CLIENTELE	• Multilingual environment valuable for all. • Of particular importance for NESB children who would not otherwise hear their language in the program.
CONTEXT	• Children's services e.g. any kindergarten or child care centre.
LANGUAGE EMPHASES	• English for all children. • Exposure of all to LOTES.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH PROJECT

Background to Research

The aim was to develop recommendations, policies, models and strategies that would assist people to establish, maintain and evaluate bilingual models in preschool or child care centres, either as full bilingual programs or as bilingual perspectives in other programs.

Models of bilingual programs were to be presented that could be expected to develop the linguistic skills of young children in both the mother tongue and the second language, and would do this in environments and with practices that are appropriate for children from birth to five years of age across all areas of development. A discussion of what constitutes a bilingual early childhood program is included in Chapter 3.

The method was to describe and evaluate aspects of the bilingual programs in selected child care and preschool centres, and to follow briefly the transition of some of the children from the bilingual programs into primary (elementary) schools.

Australia is in a unique international position in that it has an official policy of appreciation of multilingualism as a national asset, and a comprehensive and coordinated National Policy on Languages (Lo Bianco 1987). It is a policy of support for the learning of languages other than English alongside the learning of English, to develop the linguistic potential of Australia. Such a policy depicts multilingualism as a national economic and trade asset, and a symbol of group identification in a multicultural society (Clyne 1991:224).

The Victorian Language Action Plan (Lo Bianco 1989) made recommendations which, although directed at the school level of education, have particular significance in relation to the recommendations of the present study of bilingual education prior to school. The relevant Lo Bianco recommendations were that the number of bilingual education programs should increase substantially, that a much higher percentage of generalist bilingual teachers should be employed, and that a successful study in the LOTE (Languages Other Than English) area should confer bonus points for university entrance selection.

One of the difficulties of setting up and maintaining bilingual programs in Australian primary schools is the cultural diversity reflected in many classrooms. It is possible for a class of thirty children to contain twenty or more different language backgrounds. Even where bilingual programs are set up to cater for a major ethnic group within the school population, that ethnic group may be under-represented in the school population within a couple of years as families move out of the area of original residence.

Bilingual programs in child care or preschool centres, on the other hand, can have a stability which bilingual programs in primary schools find it difficult to maintain. Within the system of early childhood education, below school age, it is easier to maintain a client base for bilingual programs, particularly if an ethnic community supports and develops the program. Children below school age are always escorted to and from preschool or child care by adults. Even if the members of the ethnic community are scattered, a bilingual early childhood centre can serve families coming from a wide geographical area. Thus the program does not suffer the same loss of clientele as a school does, when immigrant families move their place of residence.

The current policy in the school system is moving away from specialist English as a Second Language programs towards mainstreaming non-English speaking background children as soon as possible. The mainstreaming policy has some potential advantages. It focuses on the right of all children in Australia to have educational opportunities to develop full competence in the English language, rather than focusing on non-English speaking background children with a pre-judgment of 'disadvantaged' linguistically (Kalantzis, Cope, Noble and Poynting 1990).

Furthermore, when the status of English as a Second Language is as an extra curriculum item, it has to compete with other curriculum areas in the school. In these circumstances, English as a Second Language can easily come to be seen by some as a negative component in the total curriculum, since to choose to employ an ESL teacher may involve not being able to develop some other curriculum area. This difficulty does not arise in bilingual early childhood programs in preschool and child care centres which follow the early childhood tradition of a developmentally-oriented curriculum rather than a subject-oriented curriculum. A child-centred, developmental framework of early childhood education results in a total language environment, focusing on communicative language acquisition across all areas of the program, rather than on language as a separate curriculum area which must compete with other areas.

A communicative approach to second language learning (whether English as a second language or a language other than English) can be an effective bilingual approach in early childhood and fits comfortably within a child-centred developmental program. A communicative approach to language learning focuses on providing an environment in which children want to learn to communicate because it is immediately functional for them. They are motivated to talk so as to act on their world to make things happen; to join in or extend play; to get what they want and to respond to the interests and challenges in the environment. Bruner (1990) has shown how important this functional communicative aspect of language is for early development of a child's mother tongue. It is also likely to be extremely powerful as a motivational force for second language acquisition in a bilingual early childhood program (Clarke 1992).

The move to mainstreaming in schools makes it all the more important not to waste, nor leave to chance, bilingual language development for non-English speaking background children in the years prior to school entry. A bilingual early childhood program which develops both children's first language and their second language, can be expected to facilitate the transition of children into language programs of all kinds in primary school.

In Australia, school entry is at approximately five years of age. Child care is not part of the school system and, in some states, preschools and kindergartens are also not part of the formal school system. Information does not always flow across systems and there is often not sufficient recognition of the type and amount of first and second second language acquisition that may have taken place in preschool or child care programs before children enter school. A child in the beginners' class at school who speaks a language other than English at home may be referred to by his school teacher as having 'no language' because he does not yet speak English in the school classroom. The child may already be displaying a functional level of English in the school playground but not yet in the formal classroom situation which still may be too strange an environment for him to feel confident in speaking English. The FKA Multicultural Resource Centre develops materials, and conducts seminars, to help educators bridge the information gap across systems from preschool to primary school.

It is not simply at the level of primary school that there has been some failure to recognize that many children are developing their bilingual skills from a very early age. Many non-English speaking background children who attend mainstream preschool or child care programs that do not include any bilingual

aspects, have had to develop English in isolation from the maintenance of their first language. This is because the value of maintaining the first language while the child is learning English as a second language has not been fully recognized by all practitioners in the early childhood field. Children do not learn English better if they forget or neglect their home language, yet many educators and parents still cling to this old belief. As Lo Bianco (1992:7) has recently said:

> It seems that it is only with languages that schools expect children to unlearn valuable knowledge and skills they have gained at home; a curious role for institutions of learning.

Methodology

Ethnographic Approach

The research approach in this study involves a recording of language interactions in natural settings, as non-intrusively as possible. This approach was chosen in view of the fact that there has been very little systematic observation and discussion of what actually takes place in bilingual programs for children in child care or preschool centres.

It is not always appreciated that child care or preschool environments are usually very different from the more formal structure to be found in many school classrooms. Failure to appreciate this difference means a failure to appreciate the rich communicative interactions that can take place within child-centred child care or preschool settings and, with this, a failure to appreciate why a preschool or child care program can be a very good setting for the acquisition of languages, including English as a second language and languages other than English. Even teachers in primary schools who create whole language environments in their own school classrooms, may be unaware of the language environment to which the children have been exposed in the early childhood centre before they commenced school. Observation of the hour-to-hour and day-to-day activities and interactions in bilingual child care settings were sought in this project, to provide some of the missing descriptions as a data base.

The following rationale for ethnographic research, adapted from Van Lier (1988) summarizes the approach of the present study:

1. our knowledge of what goes on in bilingual child care and preschool programs in Australia is extremely limited;
2. it is relevant and valuable to increase that knowledge;
3. this can only be done by going into the centres for data;
4. all data must be interpreted in the context of their occurrence;
5. this context is not only a linguistic or cognitive one, it is also essentially a social context.

It was decided to study selected bilingual early childhood programs, in different environments and with different language models, and to focus on spontaneous examples of learner and educator language and person to person communication within the selected programs, rather than on language elicited by researchers. Many different methods of data collection were used. Audio-video tape recording was the main method but other methods included time-sampling observations, written running records, checklists and perusal of records and publications of centres.

Bilingual Centres

Three existing bilingual child care centres were selected for detailed study: a Greek-English, a Vietnamese-English and an Arabic-English model. Each centre was visited at least seven times. Coordinators from these three centres were members of the Steering Committee for the project. During the course of the project, as a result of discussion with members of the steering committee and staff in other bilingual programs, it was felt desirable to add information from some other programs which represented different types of language models. Additional child care centres were visited and are used within the description framework.

A sessional preschool (sessions of two and a half hours a day) with a long-established multilingual program was also visited regularly and included in the descriptive framework. The preschool was included because the multilingual nature of the program represented another model characterized by the large proportion of bilingual staff workers and of children from many different language backgrounds. Some of the children from one of the child care centres selected for detailed study were also attending this preschool.

Discussion also took place with staff from other centres during inservice seminars related to the project, and through visits or telephone conversations. The contributions of staff members from these additional centres provided

valuable additional perspectives on the various types of bilingual program models. Data from twenty centres in all were examined and were incorporated into the chart of models described in Chapter 3 of this report.

Audio-video Recording

The main method of data collection was through video recordings together with radio microphones. The oldest group of children in each of the three main child care centres was videotaped on three or four occasions, resulting in approximately ten hours of videotape data from each centre. The videotapes covered as many different times of day and aspects of the program as possible: indoor and outdoor, structured and unstructured activities, planned sessions and spontaneous play, large and small groups.

From this data was obtained an overall view of the working of each group of the four-to-five year old children, within its own physical, social, cultural and linguistic context. Within this broader perspective, researchers could then focus in on details, as deemed appropriate, the details being located accurately within the total context. The richness of description that the videotape recordings make possible, greatly facilitates the exploration of spontaneous adult-child and child-child interactions. The videotape method can provide not only a record of the child's language output but also a record of the input from the language models surrounding the child - both adults and children, and the social and physical context of the language interactions. Furthermore, the video records not only what each speaker said but how they said it - the pronunciation, intonation etc.

Another advantage of videotape data was that it would enable researchers to go back over data for re-checking by different observers. This reliability check by more than one researcher, including native speakers of each language, was deemed necessary for accurate analysis of language use, language interactions and the social context of language. Video recording provides a method of checking the selectivity and subjectivity which creeps into all on-the-spot observing, particularly in the types of environments with which researchers are familiar, and in situations where a great deal of activity is going on at the same time or in rapid sequence. The familiarity of researchers with the type of environments and the amount of activity were both factors of the present study. The use of video recording enabled these two factors to be controlled, yet allowed their potential positive contributions to the study to be used.

Observations

Data was also gathered through observations without filming at each of the three main child care centres and at five additional centres. There were observations of all groups of children in each centre. Although the main focus of the research was on the four-to-five year old children who were expected to be going to school at the start of the next year, observations in the other groups provided knowledge of the broader context.

Attention was given not only to child-child and child-adult interactions but also to materials, equipment and program content. Particular attention was given to materials and content related to language and early literacy development such as books and stories used with or by children; pictures, posters and other visual images; drawing, painting and writing materials and use; songs, rhymes, chants and musical experiences and the frequency and language content of symbolic play.

Selected Children

Within the groups of older children, three children at each of the three main child care centres were selected for more detailed attention. The primary purpose was to ensure that sufficient language data would be collected on at least two or three children from each centre to enable researchers to make judgments about their first and second language development.

Criteria for selection were:

1. the children should be expected to be commencing school at the start of the following year;
2. the dominant language in the home should be the major language other than English of the early childhood bilingual program;
3. the group of three from each centre should include both male and female children;
4. the children should be in their third year of attendance at the bilingual centre;
5. the children should be judged by the teacher or the coordinator of the centre to have normal first language development and to be within the range of development of English as a second language which generally represented the group.

Staff

The terms 'staff' or 'educator' were used interchangeably to cover each teacher or caregiver in a program. Talks were held with educators at the commencement, during, and at the completion of the data gathering.

Data gathering situations included individual meetings with centre coordinators; access to planning notes and, in two centres, to staff planning sessions; and regular contact with educators at the centres over three months. Items discussed included history, management and funding of the centre; philosophy, rules and procedures; enrolments; staff qualifications, experience and deployment; program planning and timetabling; methods of keeping records of children's progress; contact with schools; knowledge of different language policies and programs in local schools; contact with families; staff contact with management committees and the flow of information; family cultural and language backgrounds; areas of strengths and difficulties; and staff professional development plans and needs. In addition, staff members in charge of the older children contributed their time and knowledge generously in such actions as making records and planning notes available, drawing our attention to language achievements of children between visits, and completing language checklists for selected children in their first and second languages. There was much informal discussion of the experiences of bilingual staff members' own language development and education throughout childhood.

At the completion of the data gathering, two inservice sessions were held for educators involved in the project and for any others working or interested in working in bilingual early childhood programs. The demand for places in these sessions was heavy.

Parents

Parent input was valued but was limited to letters describing the project and seeking permission from parents for their children to participate, two group meetings of parents from one centre only, and casual on-the-run contact. Since child care parents have heavy demands on their time, it had been decided, on the advice of coordinators, to seek information from parents in most centres mainly through staff. More direct parent contact would have been valuable.

Transition to School

Telephone contact was made with all schools receiving any of the nine selected children from the study, and visits were paid to three schools - one for each of the three main mother tongue language groups in the study. These contacts were made at the beginning of second term, allowing time for children to settle into school and time for teachers to assess their language and early literacy development.

Verbal reports of the children's progress were obtained from school teachers. In one centre, verbal reports were also obtained from a teacher in the Saturday ethnic language program. In another centre, verbal reports about school progress were also obtained from one of the parents, at intervals of three months throughout the child's first year. Discussion focused on each child's general adjustment to school, general progress in school work, progress in English, whether the school had an ESL program and whether the child participated in it, the value placed by the school on mother tongue maintenance and the ways in which the school encouraged or supported this, information about community language or LOTE programs in the primary school and children's participation in any of these programs or in ethnic language programs out of school hours, and the school's knowledge of or interest in the child's participation in the bilingual program in the preschool or child care centre prior to school entry.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Overall Program

Bilingual early childhood education must take place within a program of total development. Whereas it may be appropriate to isolate language when teaching adults, for young children language is inextricably bound to cognitive, social and personality development. As Wong-Fillmore states:

> The early childhood interventions that work for language-minority children are the ones that work for all children. Children need the kind of early education experiences, in a language they understand, that turn them into enthusiastic and independent learners. They need experiences that build on the linguistic and intellectual resources they already have (Wong-Fillmore 1991:32).

Writing on the approach to bilingual programs of the well-known High/Scope foundation in the USA, Weikart and colleagues identify 'active learning' as the key ingredient:

> No matter what their linguistic and ethnic background, all children need the opportunities for active learning which form the basis for the development of mental, physical and social abilities (Hohmann, Banet & Weikart 1979:8).

All centres visited in the present study were providing programs of care and education that encouraged appropriate experiences and interactions for active learning in the major areas of development, in line with accepted guidelines for practice such as those set out by the Office of Preschool and Child Care Victoria (OPCC 1991) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (Bredekamp 1987). There was variety in the quality of bilingual programs, just as there is in the quality of mainstream programs. Some programs appeared to be achieving objectives at a higher level, and with greater clarity, than other programs. Our overall aim must be to learn more about the characteristics of the most effective programs.

In most centres, teaching and learning content and strategies appeared to be achieving a balance between traditional Australian elements and other

elements reflecting the specific ethnic cultures of the centre, although this was not without some strain as described in this chapter.

Cognitive Development

Research suggests that bringing up children bilingually can contribute to their cognitive flexibility. Children reared bilingually are learning that there is more than one way to categorize something, more than one way to view the world (Skutnabb-Kangas 1981). The positive cognitive effects are more likely to result in balanced bilingual programs that give equal weight to both languages rather than in assimilatory programs where the aim is that the home language is rapidly replaced by the dominant language of the society. In the present study we did not attempt to measure cognitive flexibility. Rather, we focused on the status of both languages in a bilingual program, as discussed later in this chapter. The focus was thus on seeing whether the conditions that favoured the cognitive flexibility factor appeared to be present. In all cases but one they were present, as evidenced by the status accorded to the language other than English.

Another aspect of cognition considered in the present project was the amount of intellectual stimulation available from each bilingual program. Although meeting minimal standards, it could be said that some programs had very little going on that interested the children, for long periods every day. Apparent boredom frequently was observed to lead to aggressive or disruptive behaviour and the behaviour or the child might be labelled a problem without the boredom being identified. In other cases, if the child's behaviour was not disruptive, the lack of stimulation for that child might apparently not be noticed.

An intellectually boring program was often associated with drill type instructional activities such as copying the outlines of letters, or a long formal group time with many children expected to sit still for long periods without active participation, either physical or verbal. Children in other programs consistently displayed a high level of intellectual curiosity and exploration, accompanied by lively language, social and physical activity. These differences in programs are in no way confined to bilingual programs; they can be found throughout the field of early childhood education. It should be noted that the measures used in this study did not allow us to show that the less stimulating programs affected language development; this is an avenue for further research.

Play

There were differences evident in the understanding of the place of play in an early childhood learning environment and in a bilingual program. In the light of conversations with individual staff members, this seemed to be the most frequent single element leading to tension and frustration between staff in several centres. Cultural as well as other differences appeared to be operating and leading to problems of communication between staff holding different concepts of key concepts such as 'play' and 'educational activities'.

Cultural differences were sometimes exacerbated by differences in teacher training; staff whose basic teacher training was for primary or secondary levels of education often had difficulty in seeing the potential for learning in any play situations. This was acknowledged in three separate instances by staff members at different centres who had had a primary or secondary school training and were now engaged in some early childhood training. It is also identified as a gap in the training of many primary teachers in a recent report to the Victorian Department of School Education (Collins 1992). On the other hand, educators trained within an early childhood development approach sometimes had difficulty in articulating to their colleagues and parents the value and purpose of their play approach beyond stating their simple belief in it as 'a good thing'. They were not always able to explain or demonstrate how they used play to extend children's knowledge and skills.

In addition to gaps by staff members in the appreciation and articulation of play as a general educational process, there were further gaps in their more specific knowledge of the potential positive effects of play on language development, including bilingual language development, in contrast to more instructional approaches of early childhood education. There was little discussion of the type of research reviewed by Ervin-Tripp (1991:95-96). Ervin-Tripp describes the importance of play in the process of children becoming competent bilinguals. She describes how play gives preschool children the opportunity to practice many aspects of their language learning including sounds, vocabulary, syntax, verb systems and social markers.

The result was that inappropriate activities such as formal instructional drills and work sheets, and very long periods for the children sitting still in a large group, were sometimes used to justify the 'educational content' of a program whereas the rich language practice in other parts of the program, for example when children were negotiating their roles in play in the home corner, was not

recognized as a language learning experience. Staff who did not agree with the heavily instructional approach sometimes felt pressured by other staff to adopt it.

Symbolic play, or sociodramatic play, is of particular importance because of the way it can provide practice in the development of symbolic functioning and because of its potential richness in the child-child communicative interactions that encourage language development (Schrader 1990; Creaser 1990). Very little sociodramatic play was observed in the bilingual programs visited and many educators stated that they were not aware of its significance for language development. This represents an area for focus in professional development programs.

Staff development work is critically needed to improve mutual understanding in this area as it was reported by staff as a source of frustration and tension between staff and between staff and parents in many bilingual centres. On the other hand, as some of the bilingual programs were demonstrating, where staff members are helped to communicate and reflect on their different approaches, cultural differences in pedagogical approaches can be used to strengthen rather than to weaken a program, with mutual benefits to all staff whatever their initial approach. It should be noted that, as in many other areas discussed in this report, the problems seen in bilingual programs in relation to a dichotomy between play and learning are reported in many mainstream early childhood programs, although in the mainstream the need for better communication on the issue seems to be more between parents and staff than staff and staff.

Outdoor Physical Development

Somewhat related to the dichotomy between play and learning is that between the indoor 'classroom' and the outdoor 'playground'. This is apparent in the attitude of some staff members that the children 'let off steam' in the playground in between their bouts of 'real learning' indoors. In only three of the seven centres visited was there seen to be a consistently good standard of outdoor activity involving physical, social and intellectual stimulation and learning. In the other centres there was little evidence of planning for outdoor experiences. Even quite large playgrounds were often seriously overcrowded because two or three groups of children were using them together although time-tabling could have avoided this 'doubling-up' situation.

There was, in some centres, little apparent reflection related to specific building of knowledge or skills during the time spent outdoors. The equipment was often static, such as a bare climbing frame offering few physical challenges. In one playground three groups of children amounting to approximately thirty-five children, from toddlers to four year olds, spent half an hour together. The equipment consisted of two swings, one football, one slide, and one large sandpit with utensils but no water. Typical behaviour observed many times in this playground was for a group of older boys to run about kicking the ball amongst the other children.

On the other hand, three of the bilingual programs observed had excellent programs of physical development that were said to reflect a cultural emphasis. In the experience of the researcher, these programs were well above the usual Australian mainstream approach, in their planning and practice related to physical development.

Social, Emotional and Personality Development

The reality of a multicultural society requires a more complex view of the development of individual and group identity, and self-concept, than many have been in the habit of envisaging as early childhood educators. The more complex view of identity development points to the need to re-emphasize social development.

Home language maintenance and development is important in the construction of a child's positive self identity and in the maintenance of a child's communication with parents. It is bad social policy to support early education programs that threaten mother tongue development and so jeopardise family communication patterns and cohesion (Wong-Fillmore 1991:32). The bilingual programs observed in this study rate very high in regard to appreciation and encouragement of the first language - not just its maintenance but also its development.

The centres were also showing high standards in the way staff related to children with warmth and enjoyment, meeting children's basic needs for security and a positive self-concept, from the youngest children to the oldest. Exceptions were observed in only one group in one centre. Parents in many centres often spontaneously commented on the warmth of staff towards children. Furthermore, children from non-English speaking background saw their parents being treated with respect by staff, with no observed exceptions.

Developmental psychologists are increasingly emphasizing the links between social development, cognitive development and language development (Bruner 1986, 1990). Parents of children in the bilingual programs overwhelmingly pin-pointed aspects of social development as the main value they expected their children to gain from the program. It was summed up in phrases such as 'learning to get on with lots of different people'.

While educators in centres agreed with parents about the importance of social development, there was also a tendency for many educators (like many parents) to speak as if social development 'just happens' when young children are put together in groups and 'left to work things out for themselves'. This is not so. In these circumstances young children are likely to be learning that 'might is right' (Milne 1984).

In a multicultural society, it is of crucial importance that children reach towards higher stages of social development than that of 'might is right'. We must educate citizens who will have a high level of commitment to and understanding of social justice. They must be extremely skilled in co-operation, negotiation, conflict resolution, and the ability that underlies all these - the ability to take multiple perspectives.

While educators in all centres agreed that social development was definitely part of the education of young children, most did not describe it in any depth beyond 'learning to take turns'. With the exception of educators at two centres, they were not observed to systematically plan strategies for social development. To encourage co-operation, and consideration for the welfare and rights of others, many staff members simply used verbal directives as situations arose; for example, they might call out to children with reminders that they were expected to share equipment. The teaching of negotiation and conflict resolution was handled through adults tending to do all the directing rather than involving the children in the processes of reasoning, decision making and observation of consequences. Only one educator mentioned conflict resolution as a core element of social development in a multicultural society; she was also the only educator who articulated teaching strategies in this area. The neglect of this core aspect of social development is not confined to bilingual programs.

The language learning and language practice involved in strategies for negotiation and conflict resolution in early childhood provides another reason for educators in bilingual early childhood programs to be encouraged to

develop further their skills in the area. A series of professional development workshops, rather than 'one-off' sessions, is recommended for this important area.

First and Second Language Development Within Bilingual Programs

Transcription and Translation

All audio-visual recordings (approximately ten hours for each centre) were transcribed by competent native speakers of each language. The community language material was then translated into English with the translation being entered alongside the transcription. The context of the language interactions was also recorded. The transcripts were later used to analyse both first and second languages, and for some work on adult-child and child-child communicative interactions.

Assessing Language Development

The Early Childhood Languages Checklist (Clarke 1991) was used as the main instrument for assessing language development. This instrument was developed for the FKA Multicultural Resource Centre consultants and has been extensively used by them for two years. It is based on a communicative rather than a grammatical assessment. Time has not yet allowed for analysis of the bilingual research material from a grammatical approach although it is intended that this will be done in a future study. The communicative approach to assessment was selected as the most relevant for purposes of the present research into the development of models for bilingual early childhood programs.

The broad yardstick used in the assessment of both the community language and English was whether the children were understanding and speaking the language at an age-appropriate level, keeping in mind that the ages in the checklist are stated to be age approximations only, as is appropriate in dealing with any kind of language stages in early childhood.

The assessments of each language were made by native language speakers, using both the videos and the transcriptions. Those making the assessments

were qualified early childhood educators or were FKA MRC ethnic workers experienced in the use of the checklist for language assessments. Independent assessments, using the same checklist, were made of the three selected children in each centre by the staff member in charge of these children.

The four to five year old children in two of the three main centres in the study appeared to have maintained and developed their home language, and developed English as a second language, at an age appropriate level. They were generally understanding the spoken version of their first language, and were themselves speaking their first language, at a level that could reasonably be expected of children of similar age in their country of origin.

In relation to the language development of the children in English as a second language, it was judged by FKA Multicultural Resource Centre consultants on English as a second language, who were also qualified early childhood educators, that the children in these two centres were functioning at a level that would enable them to cope successfully with mainstream schooling at the beginning of the next school year. This was confirmed with schools in the following year.

Staff expectations in relation to children's bilingual language development were often not clear. Child care staff in different centres often reported that they used a developmental checklist covering all areas of development, which they had been taught to use in their initial child care training programs. This contained a fairly simple section on language from a monolingual perspective only. When asked if they would like to help by completing more detailed language checklists of various kinds, many that were completed appeared to be characterised by a positive bias, that is, a ticking of every item unless it was very obviously not part of the child's achievement, yet informal conversation with these same staff members suggested that they had a realistic picture of the language development of each child.

These were broad judgments based on conversation, observation and recording of all children in the groups but with detailed data from three selected children only in each centre. As described at the beginning of this chapter, these children were not randomly selected. However, there is a strong impression that these bilingual models of early childhood programs were achieving their aims of fostering the maintenance and development of the home language and the development of English as a second language. They were helping to keep the home language active while the children learned English.

Involved in this process of keeping the home language active, there was not only the learning of the children that went on during their time at the centre but also the implicit and explicit support that the bilingual centre was giving to parents to keep the language active in the home.

To supplement data from the Early Childhood Languages Checklist, other instruments were constructed that showed time samples of language, the social contexts of use of each language, and educator interaction styles. There is still material to be analysed by the use of these instruments, in a carry-on study. Of particular interest will be a closer analysis of the kind of interactions and events that appear to impede children's language interactions and those that appeared to foster language.

Language Model

The language model in most centres was that generally viewed by researchers and practitioners as the best method to follow, that is, one adult speaking one language. This policy, in many variations as described in Chapter 3, appeared to work well. The results in this study support it as a model. Romaine (1989:17) points out that although this method of presentation may have advantages in helping children avoid confusion and language mixing, some theorists are now less worried about young children mixing languages. It may be, she says, that the importance of separateness of contact and exposure to each language has been over-estimated. In centres in the present study where the language policy was one person one language, the practice related to this policy was consistent but not rigid. For example, an English language model might comfort a child with a community language song.

Of the three main bilingual programs in the research, there were major difficulties only in one centre; this was the centre that contained many children of second or third generation families and, furthermore, had a different language policy: namely one adult acting as a model for two languages - both English and the community language. In theory but not in practice, the adult language models in this centre spoke both languages with the children. The basis for adult choice of language to use with a child on any occasion was not clearly articulated by staff members. There was certainly not an equal amount of both languages spoken. In practice, all the language models except one spoke English all the time they were observed. The educator who sometimes spoke the community language with children when they were being videoed still spoke English most of the time with the children and agreed that English

was used most of the time by all staff. Some of the staff members, in later discussion, said that they were not comfortable in using the community language with the children; they did not feel their own standard was high enough to serve as a good language model.

The children in this centre were never observed to speak the community language spontaneously. A few could understand and respond in simple words or phrases when greeted or asked to name something such as a picture of an animal. Many more could count to five, as they had been taught at the centre. They could join in simple songs, paid attention to picture story books read in the community language, and appeared able to recognise whether speech or writing was in the community language or in English.

The difficulties encountered in the language development of the children in this centre are common to language maintenance in many second or third generation Australian communities. They are discussed further, later in this chapter.

Status of Languages

Early childhood educators in bilingual programs must be committed to work from a perspective of early childhood bilingualism, and should understand the research evidence that well-developed home language is important for success in English as a second language and early literacy development. In all centres except two, both languages appeared to have equal status or, where there appeared to be a value weighting it was in favour of the ethnic language. This was probably an important factor in terms of the further development of the home language within a wider environment where English was the dominant language of the society as a whole.

The major exceptions to equal status were in the multilingual preschool program where English was the language common to all, and the one ethnic child care program where the majority of the children were second or third generation Australian children and English was the dominant language at the centre and in most cases the dominant or at least the equal language of the home.

The claim has been made that the early childhood education of non-English speaking background children should be entirely in their home language for optimal language, social and cognitive development (Wong-Fillmore 1991).

The important point is that the status and value of the home language in the early childhood bilingual program must be perceived by staff, parents and children as high. Otherwise, the perceived dominance and desirability of the majority language (English) to which the young child is being exposed, can contribute to the loss of the first language. In the bilingual child care programs in the present study, where the programs were managed by ethnic communities, and in the multilingual preschool program where multilingualism was obviously a dominant value, the status of the community languages was high and their maintenance was actively promoted by the educators, both community language models and English language models.

Just as the status of languages will not appear to observers (both adults and children) to be equal if community language aides are treated as if they are of lesser status than English language staff members, similar problems arise if English language staff feel culturally excluded from the ethnic community of the program. The latter problem is compounded where the English language model is the only person in the centre who does not understand the common community language spoken by the children and the other adults. The English speaker can feel isolated not only from the children and staff but from the parents, so that she is cut off from valuable day-to-day information about the children.

Both community language staff and English language staff reported that these potential sources of problems need to be recognized and regularly assessed. In several centres it was reported that they were given attention when they caused major dissatisfaction among staff, remedies were applied, then the situation tended to be ignored until major problems surfaced again. Regular attention is recommended in evaluation procedures.

Second or Third Generation Children

Staff were aware of particular problems in the centre where many of the children were third generation Australian residents. Many parents said that they were often or usually speaking English in the home even in the case of parents who said they believed in bilingual education and tried to use the ethnic language in their interactions with children. In this centre there was a policy of one adult-both languages. However, this was not always carried out in practice and English appeared to be the dominant language in the use of all staff observed in the centre, as reported above. There was, therefore, a two-pronged lack of community language input for these children compared to

those in the other two main child care centres in the study: a dearth of home input and a dearth of centre input. Furthermore, the output of the community language was not functional from a child's point of view; there was no situation where English would not serve the child's purpose just as well (or better) than any attempt to speak the community language, except for a few minutes sometimes spent on formal drills and exercises.

Many of the staff and parents were Australian born or Australian educated and did not claim to possess native-like fluency in the ethnic language. Some of the staff were not committed to a bilingual program, believing that it was better for the children to speak English all or most of the time, in preparation for school, so as to avoid difficulties at school which the staff had experienced as children.

Within this centre there was one mixed-age group, called a multicultural group, to serve families where parents wanted their children to speak English only in the centre but appreciated the cultural influence of the centre. Most of the children in this group were children from language backgrounds other than the ethnic group of the centre and other than English speaking. This group was observed briefly but not included in the research.

However, within the bilingual classrooms there were staff members who expressed non-commitment to a bilingual program. These staff members said they valued the cultural environment of the centre rather than the ethnic language acquisition and were never observed to speak a language other than English with the children. Some staff members in the bilingual groups said that their level of the community language was very limited. Several staff members reported that, although it was hard to pin down the aims of parents, many parents seemed much more concerned with the cultural emphasis of the program rather than the ethnic language maintenance.

Other staff placed more value on the community language component. They said that school policies had changed since they were school children and it was now recognized to be of value to have a knowledge of another language. These educators included stories, songs and rhymes in the ethnic language, initiated conversations in it, and encouraged parents to try to speak the community language to children in the home situation. However, the community language input and output in this centre was never observed to be equal in time or emphasis to the English language, being used less than one tenth of the time in a measured two hour period, and much of that was with a few children whose parents were judged by staff to be trying hardest to speak some of the ethnic language in the home.

Accurate information on how much ethnic language was spoken in the homes of these families was not easy to obtain. At first some parents stated their intention to speak the community language in the home as if this actually happened, then modified this information later when they felt free to speak of the difficulties encountered. Their difficulties were those reflected in the literature as common in many countries with second and third generation children.

Staff were often not certain of the language context of the home. The estimation of one educator in the group for four to five year old children was that there may have been one or perhaps two homes, at the most, where the ethnic language was used as much as English.

Many parents agreed that, for their children, it was difficult to say which was the first and which was the second language. It might sound as if these children could be true bilinguals, fluent in both languages but it became apparent that the reality was different. Many parents said that they had grown up without a high standard of achievement in either language so they wanted their children to be, first of all, fluent in English, then to have the ethnic language as a second language. It was the ethnic community language, in these cases, that was the additive language, the bonus, in the parent's eyes.

Although in some cases grandparents were said to provide useful language teachers, in more cases it was acknowledged that some children could not communicate with grandparents because the children did not speak their language well enough to understand the grandparents. In some cases the children felt that the grandparents corrected them too much and lost patience with them or laughed at their efforts. Several parents related how it was only in their own mid-teenage years or later that they had recognized the value of developing their ethnic language, sometimes so that they could maintain contact with the older generation.

The result was that second and third generation children in this bilingual program were thought by staff to increase their understanding of the ethnic language when they heard it spoken but not to speak it spontaneously with either adults or peers. Staff raised discussion about the need to re-examine the language policy of the centre and some workshops were arranged with the FKA Multicultural Resource Centre.

The difficulties experienced in this bilingual program reflect the difficulties of many second and third generation immigrant communities in retaining the

ethnic language or regenerating it. As more third generation Australians are born in ethnic communities, it becomes increasingly important that we explore further the conditions that facilitate the retention of the language resources of these groups, for the benefit of the language resources of Australian society as a whole.

The importance of evaluation of bilingual programs is discussed further later in this chapter. The FKA Multicultural Resource Centre can provide assistance to those responsible for bilingual early childhood programs, to evaluate the policies and practices of the programs and help bring them into line with present conditions and language needs in the ethnic community. It is not only staff but administrators, parents and the ethnic community that need to be involved in evaluation and choice of future directions.

If a strong bilingual program is desired for third generation children, it is necessary to employ some staff who are fluent speakers of the ethnic language, to act as language models for that language. Furthermore, it would be advisable to implement a one person-one language policy, particularly in relation to the ethnic language models, so that it would become functional for the children to speak the community language in situations where they want or need to interact with these adults.

On the other hand, the development of different types of language models for ethnic child care programs is possible and presents an interesting challenge. It may be that if the dominant language used in homes has become English, an ethnic community may want to confirm a movement towards a strong bicultural program rather than a bilingual program. Such an approach could include exploration of some new methods of community language learning in early childhood, which could carry on the innovative approach which was reflected in their earlier bilingual program.

Third Language Children

There is a need to look more closely at the development of third language children in bilingual child care programs. Third language children are not to be confused with third generation children. 'Third language children' is the term used in this project for children who come into a bilingual program speaking a home language other than the main languages in the bilingual program, which are usually an ethnic language (or more than one ethnic language) and English. Almost universally, the language development of third language

children was considered 'no problem' by the educators caring for them but this judgment was made in terms of a child's development in understanding of the two languages in the program and not in terms of the child's maintenance and development of it's home language.

In many centres, English was the first language used with these third language children then, perhaps after several weeks, the second language of the centre was added. At other centres, the newcomers were introduced to both major languages of the centre from the beginning. In all cases, staff said that most children 'picked up' enough language to function adequately and comfortably in the centre by four to six weeks. Staff said that the age of the children made no difference.

There was a great warmth of physical contact, facial expression and tone of voice by the staff members in all centres which, no doubt, helped to establish a feeling of communication and helped these children settle into the child care programs. However, their settling-in was not the issue, nor was their acquisition of English and the ethnic language of the centre; it was the home language maintenance and development for these third language children that became the issue of concern for researchers.

Researchers had reservations about the home language development of some third language children, particularly those in the toddlers' or babies' groups - when language was at an early stage of acquisition, and particularly those children in the centre where the language model was one adult-two languages. In other cases, with children who had entered the bilingual programs at around four years of age after their home language was well-established, we saw no reason to be concerned.

Detailed study of third-language children was not possible within the confines of this research. However, few educators with the younger children in the centres appeared to have serious concerns about the development of the home language of these children. Many educators did not see it as their concern, as long as the parents did not bring it up as a problem. In some cases the staff attitude seemed to imply that home language development could be divorced from whatever language development was going on in the centre. A similar attitude towards home language development was displayed by some primary school teachers during the school transition stage of this project, as is mentioned later in this chapter.

In no cases did we see any assessment of home language development of these children taken into account in developmental records at the child care centres. Some of these children were babies and toddlers, and some of these were in such long day care that the amount of exposure to their home language could have been much less than the amount of exposure to the languages in the bilingual program.

A literature search has, to date, uncovered only one brief reference to this problem. A report from a Spanish-English bilingual child care program in New South Wales (Dockett et al 1991:17) mentions briefly that staff perceptions were that minority language children at the centre were least likely to benefit from the experience. In this instance, 'minority language children' refers to children from home backgrounds other than English or Spanish speaking.

We need to know more about the conditions under which home language development can be expected to proceed normally, or be interrupted, in third language children in bilingual child care. Factors to be explored should include: age of child and stage of home language development on entry to the program, hours of attendance at the centre in relation to hours of exposure to the home language, and procedures for checking home language development at regular intervals.

Affective Factors

Assessing how a child feels about learning a second language, and about the second culture, is no less important than the language learning itself. Systematic evaluation of the affective domain was not undertaken in this study. On the basis of observations, anecdotes, and the video recordings, we have evidence of nothing but positive feelings towards all languages and cultures encountered in the research project.

Where children were being immersed in bilingual environments in a very matter of fact way, they responded in the same matter of fact way that accepted bilingualism as normal; the two languages were immediately functional and were related to pleasurable concrete experiences such as play, eating, stories and songs. Bilingualism was therefore reinforced through positive affect. The children were free to take in the languages and respond to them according to their needs. There was very little pressure; consequently there was a relaxed positive attitude to the languages and an easy confidence in having a go at using either language as a communicative tool.

This positive relaxed attitude towards bilingualism was often reflected in children's mild interest to discover that the researcher could not speak the community language: *Look, I'll show you,* said four-year-old Thuy Ann. *It's easy. Just say what I say.*

Switching

In the four to five year old groups, many children displayed relaxed switching from one language to another when it was functional to switch. There was very little switching at other times and no evidence that the four to five year olds in any centre were ever confused about language codes. A common example of functional switching was talking to the community language adult then immediately addressing a remark in English to the English language model or the researcher. Another example was obtained from a group of four year old children busy at an activity around a table. This group spoke the community language to each other except when they directly addressed a child with a different language background who did not yet speak the community language but did speak some English as a second language. They addressed him in English and he replied in English.

Educator Interaction Styles

Most staff observed were using strategies of modelling that reflected a communicative approach to first and second language learning which matches well a developmentally appropriate program of early childhood education. There were few cases observed of direct correction of children's spoken errors; rather, the errors were ignored or the correct forms were modelled without comment by expansion of the child's utterance, as is appropriate in this approach.

There were differences in educators' dominant style of communication with children. In a count of language utterances during two periods of free indoor play activities, amounting to approximately three hours in all, one community language educator who appeared to have the most formal instructional approach (a qualified secondary teacher with no early childhood training) produced two hundred and four directive utterances out of a total of two hundred and sixteen utterances. This language interaction has been pinpointed by Nelson (1973) as probably not helpful for language acquisition in early childhood.

The modes of interaction that appear to be more productive of child language are those in which the adult responds to a child, or initiates conversation with a child, in terms of the child's interests and understanding. Where the child has some influence on the topic and the direction of conversation, there is likely to be more language produced by the child than that produced by adult control of the type that may elicit simple yes-no responses from the child (Dopke 1986). More analysis needs to be carried out on the data. This has proved already to be a very useful area in professional development sessions with staff.

The actual amount of language interaction of a conversational type, between the educator and individual children, is indicated as an area that it would be profitable to explore further. Observations from the present study suggest that even those educators who showed an ability to carry out good child-centred extended language interactions with individual children, may be unconsciously limiting the range of children with whom they have such conversations to as few as four or five children who are 'good talkers' and reinforce the experience for the adult by positive responses. This would be a useful area for an action research project conducted by the educators themselves, as part of a professional development program.

There was some pressure from coordinators in some centres (reported by English language models with a more child-centred approach than their colleagues) for the educators to be more instructive, particularly in relation to literacy activities such as teaching the children to write. This was regarded, by those who advocated it, as essential preparation for school. This assumption needs to be examined in relation to the expectations of entry behaviour that Australian primary schools have, which may be different from those of schools in some other cultures.

The differences in pedagogical styles towards language learning seemed to parallel the differences discussed earlier in this chapter towards a play-centred versus a work-centred approach to the total program of early education. There is a need in several centres for better communication about the value and bases of the different approaches and English language models have expressed their need for help on two fronts: to articulate the theoretical basis for their less formal approach, in ways that convince their more formal colleagues of its validity as an approach that has a place in the program; and to find ways to present activities that satisfy their employers' desire for more structured material, without violating their own understanding of how best to assist children in their language development.

The video data collection contains material for further analysis of educator interaction styles, some of which it is intended to prepare for use in professional development programs for staff in bilingual early childhood programs. There is also data on child-child language interactions which is still awaiting analysis.

Early Literacy Development

The term 'literacy' can be used in a broad sense to cover both spoken and written language. Broader still are uses that extend to any means of communication including all manner of visual and non-verbal representations of meaning which people use to communicate with each other. In a narrower but more traditional use, which we draw on in this study, the term 'literacy' refers specifically to knowledge and skills related to reading and writing. Referring to the early childhood level prior to school entry, in this study we use the term 'early literacy' to cover early acquaintance and experimentation with reading and writing.

Just as the richest spoken language exchanges tend to arise from a child's own interests and needs, so does much early acquaintance with reading and writing. The need for a child to read the contents of a packet of 'tea' in a pretend shop, or to 'write' a message on a pad by a toy telephone, are examples of situations in an early childhood program which suggest that early literacy development is being stimulated. After an extensive study of the evidence for the importance of this play approach to early literacy, Schrader (1990) supports the earlier argument of Vygotsky (1962) that play, rather than formal instruction, is the perfect vehicle for early literacy development.

As has been discussed early in this chapter, there was very little evidence of appreciation in the observed bilingual programs of the strong links between sociodramatic play and early literacy. Where the term early literacy development was introduced by the researchers it was responded to within a formal instructional mode, such as teaching children to recognize and write their own names and to recognize and, sometimes, to write the alphabet of one or both languages.

Other groups of experiences important for encouraging early literacy development are those involving stories and books; rhymes, chants and language games; and songs and musical activities. Many centres reported a shortage of supply of good quality picture story books in either language, both

books used for group stories told by an adult, and books displayed for children to select for individual activity or to 'read' to others. The quality and range of books on display for free choice by the children, in either language, reflected the stated difficulties in keeping up supplies due to financial constraints.

The FKA Multicultural Resource Centre library has children's books for borrowing by centres, in a range of community languages. It encourages the maintenance and development of the home language. However, under present conditions, the MRC cannot meet all the needs of centres. In some cases, but not all, local municipal libraries are being used to assist centres. Given the importance of books for language and literacy, the common problem of supply needs further investigation.

The oral tradition of story telling was not evident in any of the groups of children of different ages, in any of the observed centres. This may have been simply that it was not present on days when staff knew that the video camera or researchers would be intruding. A similar dearth of oral story telling is probably representative of most mainstream early childhood programs.

Numbers of children for story groups, as for other language activities such as rhymes, songs and language games, were generally large. These activities sometimes involved all the children in the program sitting on the mat for long periods of thirty minutes or so. This 'mat time' was often considered to be the most important 'teaching time' in contrast to times when the children were 'just playing'. Although it is a culturally relevant approach to education in some communities, reflecting the attitude that knowledge is to be traditionally handed down in this fashion from the teacher to groups of pupils, there is a need for bilingual staff to be encouraged to consider the use of more small groups (as well as individual interactions) for language development.

For language development, children need to be involved in talking. In large group 'mat times', there often appears to be a large amount of child language but analysis reveals that it is sometimes coming from the same few children most of the time. It may be that the more silent observers are also gaining language input through silent listening but they also need times when their spoken contributions are not pushed aside by more vocal peers. Also, adults need to make regular opportunities to hear all children speak, if they are to assess their language development; this is better done in small groups, or individually, than in large groups.

Staff Professional Development

The attitudes, knowledge and skills of individual educators is of central importance for encouraging the development of languages in the bilingual programs. There were many different program models - many different approaches to bilingual early childhood education. Within any one program there were differences apparent in the quantity and quality of language interactions and these came down to the way the educators stimulated language in many different ways throughout the day.

The more stimulating the language activities, the more clearly the educator could articulate the what, why and how of early language development. Very few of the early childhood educators working in the bilingual child care or preschool programs, who attended workshops connected to this project, felt that they had had satisfactory initial or post initial training in second language development. This is a matter of great concern, given that approximately forty percent of preschool children in Victoria come from families where the home language is one other than English.

As part of the present study, professional development workshops were planned for staff from the three main centres in the study. These created an interest which led to making them available for a group of educators - any working in bilingual early childhood programs. Educators who are aware of the limitations of their knowledge about bilingualism in early childhood stated that they needed more professional development opportunities.

It should no longer be a choice whether or not all early childhood educators have a substantial body of knowledge and skills related to first and second language acquisition in the years between birth and school entry. It is now a necessity. Institutions preparing early childhood educators can no longer pay lip service to second language acquisition through offering just a few sessions embedded in other courses, or through offering it merely as an elective study or a post-graduate specialization. This is not acceptable in Australia today where language diversity is the reality and the government policy is that all Australian children will become competent in English and at least one other language.

Staff isolation was a feeling that was frequently expressed by individuals as a major cause of low morale. In the previous discussion of the status of languages, in this chapter, there has been mention of the isolation of some English language educators who feel cut off from colleagues, children and parents because they do not speak the common community language. This

feeling is compounded when they cannot explain, in the community language or in English that the community language speakers can understand, their approach to early childhood education which may be different from the traditional model in the ethnic community. Where a staff member is young and relatively inexperienced, and the coordinator is not able to address this situation, it can easily lead to serious loss of professional self-esteem. In this kind of situation the children lose out; instead of having the benefit of two cultures they can be in the centre of an unacknowledged undercurrent of conflict between cultures.

In the professional development workshops held in conjunction with this project, the need for closer net-working with colleagues in other bilingual programs, to reduce feelings of isolation, and to provide opportunities for exchanges of ideas and for self-assessment, was the major need expressed by the English language group. The second need was for more bilingual material that would help educators explain, to ethnic community members, parents and colleagues, aspects of an Australian developmental approach to early childhood education. The recent FKA Multicultural Resource Centre kit Value of Messy Play was cited as a useful example of such material. It contains pictures, display sheets and a bilingual booklet for parents, explaining why many early childhood educators believe that sensory play with earth, water, clay, sand and finger paint is valuable for young children.

On the other hand, there is also a need for further opportunities for English language models to work through to an understanding of the cultural background to other approaches towards early education as reflected, for example, in the following comment, expressed by an experienced teacher from one ethnic community: *We expect things from the children and they know, and they like it. We teach them to do things the right way. They get a lot of satisfaction out of knowing they can do things the right way.*

Australian-trained early childhood educators, especially those working in bilingual programs, need to listen to the approach expressed above, even if it does not reflect their own philosophy of early childhood education. Educators from whatever background can gain through coming to understand a perspective that is different from that to which they are accustomed. In working towards an understanding of a different perspective, they can enrich their own approach.

In a few centres there was evidence of such enrichment through discussion with all staff about different ways in which individuals in the centre worked,

coupled with a great deal of skilful and planned leadership in helping individuals overcome reactions of threat. In these centres there was a marked attitude of appreciation of the contributions of each person; nevertheless, co-ordinators said that it was something that had to be worked on continuously and never taken for granted. In the workshops of this project, educators expressed the need for help in coming to such a position. Training for co-ordinators, in the first instance, is indicated in this area.

Cultural differences are not easily dealt with when educators from one culture or the other, or both, claim the one right approach to early childhood education. They are not resolved by appeals to what research 'proves' about what is good for children, as some of the educators in this study believed, since such research always has cultural values built in. Where the complexity of value differences is not appreciated, time, energy and professional self-esteem is squandered looking for one-off solutions. The issues must be given greater attention in professional development programs, where they may be pushed aside by topics of more obvious immediate concern or greater psychological ease. Certainly, they should form part of the regular evaluation program in each centre.

Transition to School

All except one of the nine selected children made a good transition to school; they were reported by their teachers to be doing well when the contact was made in the second term of their first year at school. The exception was a child with a possible hearing problem.

Only one school showed knowledge of and interest in the language environment to which the children had been exposed in a bilingual child care or preschool program. Many teachers appeared to consider that significant language learning began only after a child entered school or, at least, that this was the only aspect of language learning with which school teachers needed to be interested.

There was an emphasis in all schools on English as a second language. There was a great difference between schools in their attitudes and practices in relation to the maintenance of home languages. In one school, the speaking of the home language in the classroom was regarded as a 'problem' which was 'fixed' by preventing the children who spoke the same community language from sitting together. Another position was to ignore anything outside the

school focus: *Our language program is totally an ESL program so we have no problems, we take it from there; we treat all our children as ESL children.* In another school, a 'renewed vision' by staff to make all children competent in English by Year 6 had lead to a greatly increased emphasis on ESL together with a new recognition that: *Mother-tongue maintenance is fundamentally important in the first three years of primary school for full literacy competence in English; it is coupled with and is the foundation of our ESL program.*

None of the nine children who were followed through to school were in a bilingual classroom, although some bilingual classrooms were available in some schools. All nine children were in government or Catholic primary schools. Three of the nine children were having some teaching of their ethnic language at school. No children were known to be attending week-end ethnic language schools but some parents said that the children 'might go in a year or so'.

Even in those schools that were putting a new emphasis on family language background information and the need for early cooperation between home and school, there was often a marked ignorance of the importance of the language environment of the child care centre where a child may have spent significant time prior to beginning school. Therefore, children might be recorded as coming from homes where a community language only was used, without the additional information that they had, perhaps, spent three or four years in a bilingual child care program where they spoke fluent English.

The lack of appreciation of early childhood education and the need to consider the possibility of significant development of several languages prior to school entry is also, unfortunately, reflected in many of the language curriculum materials supplied for teachers. The present study suggests that there is a clear need to build networks across the preschool and school systems and to keep them alive. There is a need for the development of language profiles on children in child care and preschool programs, that can be taken on to school and will provide schools with a comprehensive picture of a child's development in languages and literacy.

Parents

Bilingual early childhood programs mean different things to different parents. However, there were some common reasons given by parents for preferring their particular bilingual program, that were mentioned frequently across

different centres. These included: feeling comfortable about the child rearing values and practices of the centre matching family values; expectations and teaching about social behaviour matching that of the home; good communication between ethnic staff and parents through the common language and cultural references; promoting the child's links to the ethnic culture; promoting the child's view of multiculturalism; and language.

The difference that was discovered in the importance schools placed on maintenance of the home language, was reflected in comments from parents. Many parents expressed views about school success depending on good English. Some parents therefore regarded the learning of English as more important than the maintenance of the home language once the children started school. These parents had chosen a bilingual child care program for their children but deliberately did not choose a bilingual school program, believing that schooling in English was best for their child's future educational success in Australia.

The language element in a bilingual child care program was valued not merely in terms of the child developing the home language and learning English but also in terms of young children being able to make themselves understood easily because of being with adults and children who spoke their first language. Particularly mentioned by parents of children who were still babies or toddlers, was the importance of language understanding coupled with cultural understanding: *Here I know I leave him with someone who understands him and I can trust.* In this study we did not have a proper sample of parents to allow us to explore further. Views obtained from parents were in harmony with staff responses when asked their opinions about why parents chose the centre.

Difficulties in communication between parents and some English speaking staff sometimes led to staff showing a lack of important information; for example: which languages the child was exposed to in the home; how parents felt about their child's first language development; or whether a child who seldom spoke at the centre was speaking normally at home. This kind of communication problem seemed to be more likely to occur in large child care centres where educators were relatively isolated in their own rooms than in smaller centres where children and several staff members were together more often, so that different language speakers could join in chats with parents and interpret for each other.

There was also evidence of a need for parents to have more information about the variety of language programs available in primary schools. Real choices can be made only on the basis of good information. In several centres parents revealed that they thought that there was 'much of a muchness' about the language programs available, when this was not the case.

Parents with children in the bilingual programs were overwhelmingly supportive of the programs. In no cases were we made aware of negative feelings about these programs compared to mainstream programs of early childhood care and education.

Evaluation

Community early childhood programs should change over time as knowledge, attitudes, needs and desires change. Effective evaluation procedures will allow bilingual programs to reflect and influence these community changes. Evaluation is also necessary if the program is to have internal direction which is flexible yet purposeful, rather than ad hoc changes. Evaluation is a necessary part of accountability for the expenditure of public funds. Finally, evaluation is necessary for staff morale and professional development.

In many programs, evaluation is not taking place at a level sufficient to achieve the above purposes. This leads not only to a shortage of the type of information necessary for individual programs to make effective changes but also to a general shortage of information about Australian bilingual early childhood programs. In the present project, it was difficult even to obtain the information to construct a list of all government funded bilingual early childhood programs.

Finding time and resources for a regular, systematic evaluation of the total program of a centre was a common problem. If staff were to be involved during working hours, as was thought highly desirable, it was necessary to arrange for there to be replacement staff with the children and this was difficult for all centres financially. If evaluation sessions were to be held in the evenings, it was felt to be difficult to make too great a demand on the time of all participants, consequently the evaluation could not be extensive. There was seldom money regularly set aside for evaluation. Leadership in evaluation procedures was not thought to be readily available. There was not regular use of outside consultants; where these were used for an evaluation it tended to be a 'one-off' affair, therefore recommendations often were not followed up in a systematic fashion to see how they worked if they were implemented.

As a result of the above difficulties over evaluation, decisions over changes to programs often seemed to be going on in bits and pieces, in a trial and error fashion, based on incomplete analysis of the relationships between aims, policies, practices and results. Without clear statements about what the program is intended to achieve, and how people will know whether it is achieving these things or not, staff members do not get sufficient reinforcement and guidance, and coordinators sometimes are frustrated by their inability to influence significant changes.

Conclusion

Notwithstanding individual differences in the quality of language interactions, this study supports the claim that bilingual early childhood programs can provide excellent environments for the maintenance and development of a child's first language and the development of English as a second language.

The communicative approach to second language acquisition (whether the second language is English or a language other than English) is an effective bilingual approach in early childhood education prior to school entry and fits comfortably within a child-centred developmental program in which children want to learn to communicate because it is immediately meaningful and useful to them. In a communicative approach, the emphasis is on learning taking place through active use of the language by the learner in communicative interactions. Children in a bilingual early childhood program are motivated to talk so as to act on their world to make things happen; to join in or extend play; to get what they want and to respond to the interests and challenges in the environment. This study supports claims that this is an extremely powerful motivational force for first and second language development. The years of early childhood prior to school entry are a time when there is the possibility of a tremendous amount of exposure to this kind of language learning in a stimulating environment which can also include many bridging structures and strategies to help children learn. These years are also a time for building positive confident attitudes towards languages and cultures.

Australia is a country where difference and diversity are the reality. When setting up programs of care and education for children from birth to five years, not to take bilingualism seriously is to waste something of these years. Bilingual programs of early childhood care and education, in the years before school entry, should be a choice open to all Australian families.

Children from English speaking backgrounds are under-represented in bilingual programs. This means that opportunities are being wasted for NESB children attending bilingual programs to have peer models in English, and for English speaking background children to attend these bilingual programs and have peer models in languages other than English from an early age. Each group would act as a second language resource to the other, with reciprocal benefits which would help build the valuable language resources of Australia.

One must always remain aware of the danger that the ethnic language in a bilingual program will be weakened by an increased intake of children from English speaking backgrounds. The status of the ethnic culture and language must be well guarded for, if this is weakened, the value of the bilingual program is weakened for all participants not just for the children from the ethnic community. Where there is any imbalance in status, it should be weighted towards the ethnic language because of the dominance of English in the wider community. Where bilingual early childhood programs in the present study are managed or well-supported by ethnic communities, the communities guard the status of languages and cultures.

Bilingual early childhood programs are not necessarily more expensive to run than monolingual programs, as some programs in this study demonstrated by their employment of trained bilingual staff. Training institutions need to recognize a second language as a bonus in applicants for places in courses of training for child care and early childhood education, so that the pool of trained early childhood educators is increased and reflects the composition of Australian multicultural society.

By starting the acquisition of a second language in bilingual programs in child care, children can build up two or three or more years of second language acquisition prior to their formal school entry. This second language might be a LOTE or ESL, depending on the child's first language. Children in a bilingual child care or preschool centre are not simply having an extension of years of second language acquisition, they are also having a huge bonus of hours per week of second language input compared to what they will have later in most school programs. It is in early childhood education that the time is available for language learning because language learning permeates so many of the activities. This intensity should more than make up for any factor of less efficiency in second language acquisition of young language learners, compared to older learners, which is suggested by some research. In reviewing the evidence, Skutnabb-Kangas (1981:173) concludes that other things being equal, the more intensive the teaching is, the better the results.

Non-English speaking background children who have had two or three years of a quality bilingual program in child care, can be expected to enter primary school with ESL development at a functional level of communicative competence. English speaking background children who have had two or three years in a bilingual program in child care, will not generally be speaking the community minority language at the same level of competence as their ethnic peers have attained in ESL; however, they can have had as many hours of second language learning when they are just starting school as other children who did not attend bilingual child care programs might have when they finish their primary or even secondary school years. Obviously, there is a huge resource for language development that is largely being wasted. Utilization of these early years for bilingual education would benefit all children equally - from non-English speaking backgrounds and from English speaking backgrounds.

We need to care and educate young children within bilingual language environments where the diversity of language is a fact that permeates all aspects of the program. Such programs, rich in opportunities for communicative interaction between children, and between adults and children, can offer superb first and second language learning environments.

Further Directions

Languages and Literacy

An urgent follow-on from the present study involves the construction of Languages and Literacy Profile formats. These would be used by early childhood educators to record information about children's development in all their languages and early literacy, and would carry the information with each child into the school system at the time of school entry. The need for such profiles was highlighted in the present study when the transition of children from bilingual programs to school was studied. Without this flow of information, the language resources of many school beginners are being wasted through ignorance and neglect.

Funding for this work has been sought from both government and private sources. To date, funding proposals have been unsuccessful; the project falls into the gap between preschool and primary school funding systems. The fact that the proposed languages and literacy profile project traverses these

boundaries supports the view of its usefulness but it has proved a great funding disadvantage in inflexible systems that separate preschool and primary.

Measurement

How best can we measure language learning (both first and second language) in children below school age? The Early Childhood Language Assessment Checklist (Clarke 1992) used in the present study aims to measure functional communicative competence. The data held on video should be analysed also from a grammatical structural perspective. It could provide valuable information which is not at present available. The stage sequences presently available do not have sufficient input from children below school age.

Effectiveness of Bilingual Programs

What are some of the characteristics of the most effective bilingual early childhood programs? Researchers and staff in bilingual programs have extended their knowledge through the present research project. This knowledge needs to be presented in a variety of ways that make it readily accessible to staff members in bilingual programs including, importantly, staff who come new into the programs.

Evaluation and Information

The presentation of a report on the present research project at an international early childhood conference in the USA (Milne 1992) resulted in wide interest in Australian multiculturalism and bilingual early childhood work, and the feeling that Australian models are worth looking at more closely to provide insights for other countries. Further papers on this project should be prepared, for international journals.

Recommendations

Other future directions are revealed in the recommendations. The recommendations are presented at the beginning of this report to show the emphasis placed on making use of research of this kind to contribute to changes in the field of action.

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